



ITHACA

# UUU Connections

2018/19 Issue No. 6

February 2019

Sunday Celebrations at 10:30 am

## February 3: "When No One is Watching"

-Rev. Margaret Weis

In this multigenerational service, we will reflect together on the beauty of grace that comes from community. We will practice noticing beautiful things and how that awareness can lead us to a deeper appreciation for the world around us.

Special music by Pickup Choir

## February 10: "Intentional Forming"

-Rev. Margaret Weis

How do we grow as spiritual beings in community with one another? Together we will reflect on the ways we are shaped by this congregation, by our families, and by our practices that help form our faith and our intention in life. We will also welcome new members who will sign the book today!

Special music by FUSIT Choir

## February 17: "What Does Faith Look Like?"

-Rev. Margaret Weis

If faith is putting our values into action, what does that look like? How can we see, taste, touch, smell, and hear that we are living our lives with faith? This multigenerational Sunday will invite you to bring your ideas, hopes and dreams and put them into action.

Special music by Russell Posegate, piano

## February 24: TBA -Guest preacher

Join us as we continue to reflect on our monthly theme of faith, and what it means to be a people of faith and intention in our community and beyond.

Special music by Sally Ramirez, vocalist

## Our Vision

As the Unitarian Universalist presence in Ithaca, we envision ourselves as a vibrant, dynamic community. We cherish fellow seekers, nurture open dialogue and spiritual growth, and inspire action on matters of conscience, serving as a beacon of reason and hope in our interconnected world.

## Ministerial Musings

*"Wisdom, fundamentally, is knowing who you are, where you are, and what you're trying to do or be."* Rev. Dr. Gordon B. McKeeman

*In January we did some exploring and questioning about who we are as a religious community and what our hopes are for the future. This exploration happened with Kim Sweeney during our Dreaming Big! RE Visioning weekend, and also in worship together – complete with a potter creating a pot! – where we pondered what centers us and gives us integrity. We thought about who we are and who we want to be as the UU presence in Ithaca.*

*We've also been reflecting on the voices we bring into our worship space, and how we create an environment that is welcoming to people of all identities. In the service focused on this topic, I mentioned that I made the commitment to include at least one piece of music, poetry, words, or other material from a person of color every time I lead worship. I have been doing this for the past year-and-a-half or so.*

*Some have wondered why I have not indicated this somehow in the order of service or verbally before I read the words. I have also wondered how to make this commitment to diversity clear, so that you might appreciate the diversity of words we hear each week in service. Some congregations I know have screens where they project a picture of each person who has written the words or music, which might make this diversity more clear. I like this idea best, but we do not have the set up for this right now. Some worship leaders mention the race or gender of the person before they share their words. This would be necessary for every element of the service, whether written/created by a person of color or not, and I'm not sure that would help us maintain our worshipful atmosphere each week.*

*So, we will continue with the practice of including voices and music from people of color and I encourage you to look into the people whose words we use each week. It will be like a little homework assignment!*

*In addition, it might be interesting for you to know that the rooms we have named after important Unitarians, Universalists, and Unitarian Universalists are predominantly women and people of color. Occasionally, in our Sunday service, we will share some of the history about these people and why they have been influential in our movement.*

*I hope you'll join me in exploring more about the voices of people that have been marginalized within our movement, and help to bring them out for us to share, celebrate, and learn from!*

See you on Sunday!  
Rev. Margaret

## Religious Exploration News

For information about Religious Exploration, please contact Susanne Quagliata at [drefusit@gmail.com](mailto:drefusit@gmail.com) or 607-273-7521, ext. 23.

### Side With Love - February 3-28

During February you can Side With Love by donating children's books that portray diverse families. Children need books available that represent and promote the lives of all children. The books collected during **February** will be donated to Golden Opportunity. Golden Opportunity is a non-profit organization in Ithaca that provides quality academic support from experienced educators and is available for all students in the community.

### Environmental Forum "What happened at the UN Climate Conference?"

On Sunday, **February 3**, at 9 am, in the Mark Pederson (Arch) Room, the Environmental Interests Circle will welcome Dr. Allison Chatrchyan.

Allison is the Director of the Cornell Institute for Climate Smart Solutions, as well as a Senior Research Associate in the Departments of Development Sociology and Earth and Atmospheric Sciences at Cornell and a Faculty Fellow with Cornell's Atkinson Center for a Sustainable Future. She led Cornell's delegation to each of the last four UN climate talks, including the 2018 talks at Katowice last month. She'll give us an inside view of what was accomplished and what to expect for the talks next year.

Allison is also Principle Investigator on a National Institute of Food and Agriculture-funded grant to develop a new Extension Climate Stewards Volunteer Program for Climate Smart Communities, and she helped establish the Cornell Climate Smart Farming program and the University Climate Change Seminar series. She'll be happy to respond to your questions on any of these topics and how you can be involved.

**First Unitarian is a UUA-recognized (LGBTQ) Welcoming Congregation**

### A Message from Susanne Quagliata, Director of Religious Exploration

Kim Sweeney, a UUA-credentialed religious educator and independent consultant, visited FUSIT last month for a weekend-long Visioning Retreat. She helped us reflect on our past and consider the purpose of faith formation at FUSIT. In the process, Kim made a number of provocative and insightful observations.

Kim argued the Sunday school model is outdated and ineffective on its own. She supported this argument by informing us that only 12 percent of children raised UU identify as being UU as adults. She noted that children and adults have drastically different Sunday morning experiences in isolation from each other and that most UU children do not learn how to worship. She advocated for more multigenerational worship.

Central to Kim's point is that the home should be the setting for spiritual formation. She suggested placing more emphasis on faith formation at home could mean dedicating fewer resources to age-specific programming on Sunday mornings. Since most UUs come from other faith traditions or from no tradition at all, parents and other adults would need more opportunities to develop their own spiritual capacity. Adjusting toward this model would require a significant adjustment in time, attention, and resources.

Implementing Kim's ideas would be a substantial change for FUSIT. I'll withhold my personal opinion here, but offer some observations.

- The needs of the FUSIT community should shape our plans for faith formation.
- We should not limit ourselves to one model only because it's the model to which we are most familiar.
- Like most big decisions, we must resist the tendency to make this an either/or situation. The answer for us is likely to fall somewhere in between (i.e., we need more opportunities for people of all ages to be in community together and opportunities to gather with peers in similar ages).
- Once provided a few ideas, I think you will be excited at the many ways we can develop our faith beyond the walls of our church.

I will continue to research ways we can improve religious exploration at FUSIT, share some of my findings along the way, and encourage you to tell me how this congregation can best serve you and your family.

### Faith at Home

What spiritual practices, routines, and or reminders of our Unitarian Universalist faith are present in your home? Please jot me a quick note or post to the FUSIT Facebook page. I would love to compile a list and share it with the entire congregation.

### Religious Exploration Schedule for Children/Youth

February 3: Multigenerational Sunday  
February 10: Classroom Sunday  
February 17: Multigenerational Sunday  
February 24: Creative Sunday

## Joys and Sorrows

Our thoughts are with Jack Roscoe as he recovers at home from major back surgery.

Our thoughts are with Carol Nickerson who is currently at the Hospice residence in Ithaca (as of this printing on January 22).

### Thanks to...

... all the staff, musicians, ushers, readers and other volunteers for the Christmas Eve services.

...Susanne Quagliata for organizing the meaningful Winter Solstice Service.

...those who helped to make the Quiet Christmas something special.

... the preschool class for making beautiful cards for members who are not able to make it to services regularly.

... Molly Robbins for hosting our annual Christmas Day dinner and all those who helped set up, clean up, and celebrate the holiday.

...Team 4 under Coordinators Russ Charif and Wendy Wolfe for greeting, ushering, snack providing, coffee prepping and cleaning up after the Sunday services on December 16 and 23, and to The Forest Cookies under Helen Ann Yunis and Pat Evans for taking on those tasks on December 30 and January 6 and 13.

*Snack providers, please remember to provide a list of potentially sensitive ingredients.*

For information about Hospitality Teams, please contact Pat Evans or John Gaines on Sunday or get in touch with Pat at [patevans46@gmail.com](mailto:patevans46@gmail.com) or John at (607) 898-3943 or at [jag222@cornell.edu](mailto:jag222@cornell.edu).

### Book Discussion Group

The FUSIT Book Discussion Group will meet Friday, **February 1** for the book "*Squirting Milk at Chameleons*" by Simon Fenton, and **March 1** for the book "*Life After Life*" by Kate Atkinson.

Contact Jennifer Streid-Mullen at 351-3087 or [streidmull@gmail.com](mailto:streidmull@gmail.com).

## Our Vision

As the Unitarian Universalist presence in Ithaca, we envision ourselves as a vibrant, dynamic community. We cherish fellow seekers, nurture open dialogue and spiritual growth, and inspire action on matters of conscience, serving as a beacon of reason and hope in our interconnected world.



## All Church Night February 13!

On the second Wednesday of each month, we will gather for a **Potluck Dinner at 5:30 pm in the Parlor & many teams will have their meetings.**

*We will be offering free childcare!*

*A great opportunity for multi-team collaboration, welcoming of newcomers and families, and engaging together in community. We hope you'll join us!*

*Please bring a dish to share.*

The following teams will participate in our All Church Night on **February 13th!**

If you'd like YOUR ministry team to participate in the All Church Night, have your team leader speak with Rev. Margaret.

Team/Committee	Time Slot
Aesthetics Team	6:30-7:30 pm
Religious Exploration Team	6:30-7:30 pm
Environmental Interests Circle	6:30-7:30 pm
Teen Team (HS Youth Group)	6:30-7:30 pm
Finance and Endowment	6:30-7:30 pm
Community Outreach and Engagement Team	7:30-9:00 pm
Care Team	7:30-9:00 pm
Buildings and Grounds	7:30-9:00 pm

### Social Justice Council Meeting

The Social Justice Council will hold its regular monthly meeting on Monday, **February 11th**, from 5:30-7:30 pm in Room 122 (Francis Ellen Watkins Harper Room). Come learn what our various action teams are doing, participate in choosing the recipient of each month's "Sharing Sunday" and enjoy good sociability and conversation. All are welcome!

As the state legislature opens its new session we are working hard to gain support for The New York Health Act which would provide affordable, comprehensive health care for all New Yorkers. We will have information at the Social Justice table about actions you can take today to help make that happen.

Minister  
Ren. Margaret Weis  
273-7521, ext. 22  
[minister@uunitbaca.org](mailto:minister@uunitbaca.org)

Religious Exploration  
Susanne Quagliata, Acting  
Director, 273-7521, ext. 23  
[drefusit@gmail.com](mailto:drefusit@gmail.com)

Sexton  
Sandy Soule, 272-4475

Bookkeeper  
Lauren Ponzone  
[bookkeeper@uunitbaca.org](mailto:bookkeeper@uunitbaca.org)

Music Director  
Stephanie Ortolano  
607-708-8088  
[fusitmusic@gmail.com](mailto:fusitmusic@gmail.com)

Adult Choir Director  
Jennifer Lawrence Birnbaum,  
[fusitchoir@gmail.com](mailto:fusitchoir@gmail.com)

Community Engagement and  
Outreach Coordinator  
Sarah Buckser, 273-7521, ext 24  
[memcoord@uunitbaca.org](mailto:memcoord@uunitbaca.org)

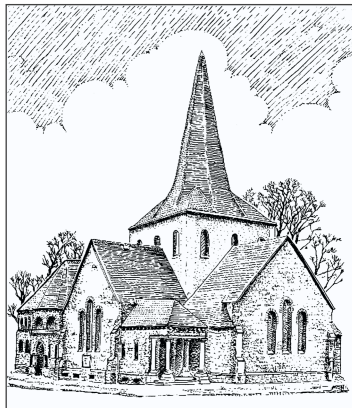
President, Board of Trustees  
Angela Zhang  
[angela.jibong@gmail.com](mailto:angela.jibong@gmail.com)  
607-216-7162

Care Team  
Molly Robbins  
[robbinsmolly18@gmail.com](mailto:robbinsmolly18@gmail.com)

Congregational Administrator  
Jessica English  
273-7521 ext 21  
[cadmin@uunitbaca.org](mailto:cadmin@uunitbaca.org)

Administrative Assistant  
Loretta Heimbuch, 273-7521  
ext 28, [adminasst@uunitbaca.org](mailto:adminasst@uunitbaca.org)

The First Unitarian Society of Ithaca  
306 North Aurora Street  
P.O. Box 6  
Ithaca, NY 14851-0006



---

Visit our Website and get  
your newsletter:  
[www.uuithaca.org](http://www.uuithaca.org)

---



## Drawing the Circle Wide

Annual Seaway Gathering

May 3-4, 2019

Ithaca, NY

<https://tinyurl.com/seaway2019>

**FUSIT is thrilled to be hosting this regional annual event in early May!**

Mark your calendars, this is a great opportunity to connect with other UUs in the region. We are also putting out a **request for home hospitality** for visiting participants.

Please send an email to the office if you would like to offer a place to stay for Friday night. Registration will open on **March 1st** and more info to come.

### **Living Into Our Promise**

#### **Offering to Benefit Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism (BLUU)**

On January 13, our Sunday service focused on the ways we are called to live into our promise of Unitarian Universalism. We heard the voices of people of color within Unitarian Universalism who reflected on the ways they have been disappointed and let down, and their hopes for all of us to grow into a new reality.

We gathered our Share the Plate offering to send to BLUU to continue their important work in our movement.

Our goal was to raise \$1500 and we are more than half way there! Thank you for your generosity!

We are asking each of you to give at least \$5 to help us reach our goal for our donation to BLUU. Will you help us get there? Please send your payments to the office (with an indication they are for BLUU), or bring them with you on Sundays this month (with an indication they are for BLUU).

If you'd like to learn more about BLUU, click here (<http://www.blacklivesuu.com/>)

### **Did you know...**

*You can find out about events happening in our congregation, see pictures of past events and connect with other UUs. Like and follow us on Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/FUSofI/> Instagram @IthacaUUs and Twitter, @IthacaUUs.*



## Possible Ponderings

The theme for February is **Faith**.

*Possible Ponderings is an offering of ways you might consider engaging more deeply with the theme or reflecting on the ways the idea of Faith shows up in your life. These will also be printed in the order of service each week.*

**February 3-9:** If you had to define what you believe using only six words, which would you choose?

**February 10-16:** How are you intentionally living to be your best self? What communities, people, practices, etc. help you do so?

**February 17-23:** Do something good for someone else this week. Then, journal about that experience for five minutes.

**February 24-March 2:** How are the ideas of “faith” and “belief” different?

### **Soul Matters Material for February on “Faith”**

Our February worship theme at First Unitarian Society of Ithaca is Faith. This month’s packet includes a few short readings, spiritual exercises, and discussion questions for you to consider. Here is the link: <https://tinyurl.com/ithaca-faith>

### **Budget Requests Sought for 2019/2020**

Committee and event chairpersons are encouraged to submit their committee’s 2019/2020 budget requests to Jennifer Streid-Mullen at [streidmull@gmail.com](mailto:streidmull@gmail.com) by Friday, **February 15th**.

### **Women's Circle**

The Women’s Circle will meet Sunday, **February 24**, from 12-1:30 in the Mark Pedersen Arch Room. All who identify as women are welcome at the Women’s Circle. Contact Carol Whitlow at [whitlowcarol@gmail.com](mailto:whitlowcarol@gmail.com).

### **Men's Group**

The Men’s Group meeting for January will be held on Monday, **February 25th**. All those who identify as male are invited to join us 5:30 - 7:30 pm in the Mark Pedersen Arch Room to share stories and eat some pizza. Newcomers welcome.

Contact Jens Wennberg [jens207@gmail.com](mailto:jens207@gmail.com) or Mark Piechota [markpiechota45@gmail.com](mailto:markpiechota45@gmail.com) for information.

## **Pastoral Emergencies**

*In case of a pastoral emergency (death or hospitalization), the Rev. Margaret Weis can be reached at 607-218-4281 (cell) if you need to speak with her.*

*For non-emergency pastoral care, please contact the Care Team Chair, Molly Robbins at [robbinsmolly18@gmail.com](mailto:robbinsmolly18@gmail.com).*

*Additionally, if you need a ride to any event at church, please contact Molly at the numbers listed above as early as possible, so that they can contact a member who is willing to help. If you are willing to provide occasional rides for others, contact Molly to give her your name and contact information.*

## **Supplies Needed for 2nd Wind Cottages for Homeless Men**

One of our small group ministries does its service project at Second Wind Cottages for Homeless Men. As a flip team they clean and refurnish a cottage between occupants. A second small group raised \$325 to help pay for cottage supplies. This was a supportive effort demonstrating a new possibility for cooperation between small groups!

The need for supplies and furnishings is ongoing at Second Wind, because when an occupant successfully transitions to independent living, he is allowed to take whatever he wants of his furnishings.

If you are want to donate items, please consider Second Wind. Each cottage has a living area, fully equipped kitchen, and a sleeping area. Furniture such as twin beds and bedding, chest of drawers, small side and kitchen sized dining tables, small bookshelves, floor lamps, and a comfy chair are particularly appreciated. Large items can be picked up by arrangement, smaller items like pots and pans can be dropped off at any time on the closed porch at 502 S Plain St.

Questions, to see a fuller list of equipment, or to ask for pick up, email Judy Jones [jwj2@cornell.edu](mailto:jwj2@cornell.edu).



## **CHOIR NEWS!**

New members always welcome. Join for a month, a semester or a year! Rehearsals are on Thursday evenings.

Upcoming choir dates:

**February 3** - Snow Date Pickup Choir

*Always wanted to join choir but can't make a commitment to regular Thursday evenings? Come at 9 am on **February 3rd** to the Sanctuary, learn some Justice Choir songs and sing them in the service at 10:30. ALL AGES WELCOME.*

**February 10** - Choir Sunday - Faith

**March 10** - Choir Sunday - Resilience

**April 28** - Choir Sunday - Revelation

**May 19** - Choir Sunday - Tradition

**June 4** - Tuesday evening - Interfaith Pride Service

Contact Jennifer Lawrence Birnbaum [fusitchoir@gmail.com](mailto:fusitchoir@gmail.com) for more information

## Board of Trustees February Meeting

The Board of Trustees will meet on Tuesday, **February 12<sup>th</sup>** from 6-8 pm in the Parlor. All interested persons are invited to attend.

## Ride For Life

For 21 years, the AIDS Ride for Life has been raising money and awareness in the fight against HIV/AIDS and Harm Reduction regarding substance use. The fully supported ride is 102, 90, 69, 42, 25 or 14 miles with indoor cyclists joining around many communities!

FUSIT has a long-standing tradition of hosting the first pit stop of the ride (under the direction of Phyllis Smith-Hansen), and we will be hosting again!

This year FUSIT is creating a team of riders in memory of our beloved Mark Pedersen, who died suddenly this past fall. Our team, riding under the name “Mark Rides On” will be captained by Rod Howe, Rev. Margaret Weis, and Susan Weis!

We hope you’ll sign up to ride with us – regardless of the distance you choose – and will be involved in our many training rides and socials leading up to the event on **September 6, 2019**. If you would like to be on our team, please select the team “Mark Rides On” when you fill out the registration form. If you need to register at a discounted rate, please email Rev. Margaret ([minister@uuithaca.org](mailto:minister@uuithaca.org)) for more information.

Here is the registration link: <http://aidsrideforlife.org/rider/registration>  
More information to come!

## From the Care Team

The Care Team will hold its monthly meeting on All Church Night, **February 13<sup>th</sup>**, from 7:30-9:00 pm, after the potluck dinner.

If you have questions about how you’d like to be involved, feel free to contact Molly Robbins at [robbinsmolly18@gmail.com](mailto:robbinsmolly18@gmail.com).

Are you having trouble finding enough food to eat or to feed your family? If you are experiencing food insecurity, please let Rev. Weis know or connect with Joanne Farbman, who is our volunteer that helps those of us experiencing food insecurity connect with resources in our community. Joanne can be reached via email at [jsfarbman@gmail.com](mailto:jsfarbman@gmail.com).

## Library Notes

There are several books in our collection that relate to the theme of racial justice that was introduced in the Sunday service on January 13.

UU minister, the Rev. Mark D. Morrison-Reed, has written, “Black Pioneers in a White Denomination.” We have this book and highly recommend it as an introduction to the history of black ministry in the UUA. The Beacon Press has just published his “long awaited chronicle”, “Revisiting the Empowerment Controversy: Black Power and Unitarian Universalism”, which is on order.

Other books of interest to borrow are: “Centering: Navigating Race, Authenticity, and Power in Ministry”, a 2017-18 Common Read for UU’s; “Soul Work: anti-racist theologies in dialogue”. A comment on the cover by Rosemary Bray McNatt states, “Will there ever be a time when we can authentically be who we are, believe what we believe, speak our own truth, sing our own song— and be with one another?”

You will find these and others on display on top of the shelf as you enter the library. Any questions or suggestions, please contact Barbara Shew at [barbrandy51@gmail.com](mailto:barbrandy51@gmail.com).

## Recap from Dreaming Big! RE - Visioning Weekend

Wow – what a great weekend we had with Kim Sweeney. Thank you to each of you who made it to one (or more!) of the sessions. For those of you who weren't able to be there, we would love to hear your thoughts about any of the questions listed in the recap below!

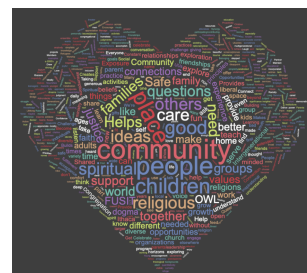
Here are some highlights from our time together:

- About 50 of us gathered on Friday evening for some lively discussion and exploration of some key questions about our congregation. Among them: What is our purpose? Who do we serve? What can families get here at FUSIT that they can't get anywhere else?
- Kim met with our Safe Congregation Policy Team to discuss how we can create policies and ways of living into our covenant as an intentional community, in order to create the safest environment possible for people of all ages at FUSIT.
- Saturday afternoon about 20 of our leaders and staff met with Kim to consider faith formation – how does this happen at FUSIT? How do we learn (and teach) what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist in the world? What is our vision for an inspiring, wholistic, and dynamic multigenerational faith formation program at FUSIT?
- Sunday we shared a worship service together, complete with a potter who spoke about the importance of centering ourselves over and over again, and created a pot during the sermon as an illustration of this idea! That pot will eventually be used in our annual water communion service each fall when we bless the water we gather together.

## What's next?

- Keep your eyes peeled for an upcoming follow up session with our RE Visioning Team who will help us craft how we will move forward as a congregation as a community for faith formation.
- We may be trying some new initiatives at FUSIT to help us live into our covenant and grow together. I hope you'll engage with these new ideas and new efforts with an open heart and an open mind.

Looking forward to what we can create together!  
*Rev. Margaret*



*Here are the words those gathered during the weekend used to describe FUSIT. What words would you use?*